

PANEL DESCRIPTION

Conversations on the Future of the South (Town Meeting)

Tuesday, June 11, 2002
10:00 am – 11:30 am
Hilton Head Crowne Plaza

Participants

1. Moderator: The Honorable Jim Hodges, South Carolina
2. The Honorable Mike Huckabee, Arkansas
3. The Honorable Ronnie Musgrove, Mississippi
4. The Honorable Richard W. Riley, Former Secretary of Education and Former Governor of South Carolina
5. Mr. Ramón Cantero-Frau, Secretary, Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce
6. Dr. Clinton Bristow, President, Alcorn University
7. Dr. Beverly Divers-White, Vice President of Programs, Foundation for the Mid South

Logistics

This session will be taped and edited for public television. Please show up at least 15 minutes ahead of time to get wired for sound, and to check on any last-minutes changes in the format. We will also ask you to remove your nametags for the taping.

Panel Description

This session is designed to launch a new line of discussion in our ongoing conversation about the future of the South. It will focus on the intersection between workforce development (this year's theme) and leadership development (next year's theme). The discussion will also help start the visioning process for the *2003 Report on the Future of the South*.

The dialog should be forward-looking, and reflect the panelists' sense of what the South can achieve and how we go about realizing a brighter future.

Panel Format

Governor Hodges will moderate an interactive dialog in the style of a town meeting or talk show. He will pose a number of questions to the panelists to start off the conversation, and may draw in the audience as the conversation develops (e.g., inviting questions, asking for a show of hands, allowing members of the audience to briefly voice

their opinions). Sample questions are provided below, but the energy from these Town Meeting sessions always comes from the original thought, ideas and responses of the participants, often triggered by the earlier panels and speakers.

The tone of the panel should be relaxed and conversational. Your responses to Governor Hodge's questions should be kept very brief, preferably no more than 1-2 minutes, but, with the permission of the moderator, you are encouraged to react or add to the other panelists' remarks, or pose your own question of the others.

The first question will be an open-ended invitation to comment on your overall vision of the future. Each panelist will be allowed 2-3 minutes to comment before the discussion opens up to the Town Meeting format.

Questions

Overall Vision

1. Talk to us about your vision of the economy and quality of life in your state/territory 10 years from now. What are the three most important factors that will determine whether we are able to create a brighter future?

Creating the Political Will for Workforce Improvements

2. An enormous amount of political capital will be needed to raise skills across the board and change the way services are provided—more political capital than any one person or group can muster. Where does the resistance to change come from, and how can we build consensus? Who should lead the way?
3. The *2002 Report on the Future of the South* recommends a major increase in client control over education and training services. How will this concept be received in your state/territory?
4. The *2002 Report* also calls for better education and training of neglected groups, and removal of barriers to their advancement. Taking steps to increase the upward mobility of, say, retirees, minorities, immigrants and ex-felons could be expensive and controversial. What do you think is feasible?

Leadership Development

5. Many people say that the leadership pool is too shallow—the same people are always tapped to serve on advisory boards, and tend to be from the same socio-economic background. This can lead to volunteer burn-out and a limited community dialog and vision. How do we create more business and citizen volunteer leaders, and involve a true cross-section of the population in public life? [Note: Southern Growth has been selected by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change to serve as one of ten national implementation partners for a new grassroots leadership development program entitled *LeadershipPlenty*. The program focuses on building the capacity of people from all walks of life to work together to solve community problems. Southern Growth will coordinate efforts to deliver the program in the South,

starting with five pilot sites in Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, the Tennessee Valley, and Virginia.]

6. Some people say there is a growing disconnect between elected leaders and the general public, leading to more extremes in politics and cynical feelings towards government. If this is so, how might we correct it?
7. There are many informal leaders in the community, people that kids and adults go to for personal advice (e.g., coaches, hairdressers, teachers, or a parent in public housing). Informal leaders might be able to accomplish more if they had better access to resources. Training these informal leaders is good civic-building, but how do we go to the next step and connect informal leaders with those in more formal leadership positions?
8. Many new public policies call for more private sector involvement in shaping public policy and carrying out programs. What should be done in a post-Enron environment to restore public confidence in the role of business in the public life?
9. At last year's conference, Southern Growth unveiled *Pathways to Prosperity*, the first in a series of discussion guides designed to elicit citizen perspectives on issues of importance to the region. *Pathways to Prosperity* focuses on smart growth issues. How might you benefit from learning more about citizen concerns about smart growth or another particular issue?